

STELE III

for James Tenney

Version 2009 for string orchestra

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GENERAL REMARKS

The microtonal pitches indicated in the violin parts are not precise: they denote a perceptible deviation from the named pitch by somewhere between a 1/8 tone and a 1/4-tone. Nor need they be consistent for each player. Rather, they should be adapted to the individual phrasing.

Violins I are tuned an 1/8-tone higher than the concert pitch.
Violins should create a rich background for the interplay of Violas and Cello.
Double Bass should punctuate the music and play Soli.

A performance of this piece should not last less than 8 minutes.
There is no upper limit.

This piece is posthumously dedicated to James Tenney,
because I never spoke to him until it was too late.

The **CONDUCTOR** has two principal tasks:
1.) S/he provides the basic pulse to the violins
2.) With special hand signs s/he invites Va, Vc to play "Close Calls"
and Kb to play "Gongs"

S/he also starts and ends the performance - and can sculpt its dynamics and intensity.

HOW TO PLAY THE VIOLIN PARTS

- always play one open string and occasionally touch another string (double stop) in the rhythm and with the pitches indicated.
 - always senza vibrato and mostly between *ppp* and *p* (except if invited by conductor)
 - the notes on the "melodic" string can be played in any phrasing, including glissandi, portamenti and different bowing techniques.
 - Bow technique should only change gradually
 - the open string is rhythmicised by the bowing chosen, but there should always be the feeling that the main sound is the open string, punctuated by the "melodies" from the other string
 - the part consists of 7 measures that are repeated in a potentially endless loop.
- Each passage through the loop can take a different form - from totally determined by the composer to absolutely free.
- the barlines are moments of pause (between 1" and 11"). Free choice or by sign of conductor.
 - two modes of reading the part: synchronized and free.
- "Synchronized"** means playing together in time, including the pauses on the barlines.
"Free" means the two players decide independently how long their barline pauses should be. At each beginning of a loop the conductor shows which mode the next loop will be played in.

Slow and careful ♩ = 54

Violin I+II

HOW TO PLAY THE VIOLA & CELLO PARTS

Your part is improvised with the material given to you. At any time you can invent rhythms, phrases, structures.

Three expressive limitations:

- Your movement must always be slower than the violin pulse.
- Dynamic range is *ppp* to *mf*. Please make use of it.
- No vibrato.

You have two modes of interaction:

Close Calls: You play microtonal variants of the same pitch, begin and end together.

Far Cries: You use one of the given glissando models to construct a slow phrase.

And play in an antiphonal manner, answering each other's phrase.

Scordatura

Viola

Scordatura

Violoncello

Close Calls

Far Cries

HOW TO PLAY THE DOUBLE BASS PART

You can play in one of three modes:
Drones, Gong, Melodies

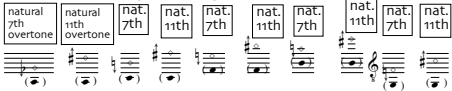
DRONE is the default mode: Choose any of the 10 given pitches (harmonics), play it for one bow-length, then stop for 5"-15" sec before playing again in **DRONE** (3/6) or **GONG** (2/6) or **MELODIES** (1/6).

GONG is a secondary mode. Use the different pizzicati and models like a gong to structure the flow of the music. For this, you need to listen to the flow of the music. Punctuation intervenes when the music seems to lose energy - to close a breath or to start a new breath. After a tacet of 10'-20' go to **DRONE** (4/5) or **MELODIES** (1/5).

GLISSANDO MELODIES is an occasional mode that you can use to comment on the melodies and phrases established by Violas and Cello. You can play these melodies as slow sliding drones or as slightly faster phrases. Once you have started a melody, play it in full, then tacet for 15"-30". Go to **DRONE** (4/5) or **GONG** (1/5).

I. Drone Pitches

harmonics on open strings



II.a Gong
Glide an almost parallel double-stop (interval = microtonally "distorted") along the two strings in a melodic glissando. (curve shown is only a suggestion.)
Freeze fret-fingers at same distance. Resulting microtonal variations of sliding interval are welcome.
Play pizz (gliss within string resonance) or arco col legno.

II.b Gong

Simultaneous 4 string pizz !
Any pitches !
Gliss within resonance !

III. Glissando Melodies

G String

play as slowly as possible
each gliss exactly one bow

A

B

C

D

E

F

NB: play melodies in any order